

What is claimed is:

1. A method of alleviating pain in a mammal, comprising contacting a neuronal cell  
5 of a cartilaginous tissue with an antagonist of a glutamate receptor, wherein inhibition of  
binding of free glutamate to said receptor on said neuronal cell alleviates pain.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said glutamate receptor is an ionotropic glutamate  
receptor.

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3. The method of claim 2, wherein said ionotropic glutamate receptor antagonist is a  
non-N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) type receptor antagonist.

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4. The method of claim 2, wherein said non-NMDA receptor antagonist is chosen  
from the group consisting of a (S)-a-amino-3-hydroxy-5-methyl-4-isoxalone propionate  
(AMPA) receptor antagonist and a kainate-activated (KA) receptor antagonist.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said antagonist is an NMDA receptor antagonist.

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6. The method of claim 5, wherein said NMDA receptor antagonist is MK-801.

7. The method of claim 4, wherein said AMPA receptor antagonist is selected from  
the group consisting of GYK152466, CNQX, and NBQX.

8. The method of claim 4, wherein said KA receptor antagonist is selected from the group consisting of LY294486, LY382884 and ACEA-1011.

5 9. The method of claim 1, wherein said glutamate receptor is metabotropic glutamate receptor.

10 10. The method of claim 1, wherein said antagonist is a metabotropic glutamate receptor antagonist selected from the group consisting of L(+)-2-amino, 3-phosphonopropionic acid (LAP-3) and (S)4-carboxy, 3-hydroxyphenyl glycine (CHPG).

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11. The method of claim 1, wherein said antagonist preferentially inhibits binding of free glutamate to a mGlu2 receptor.

15 12. The method of claim 1, wherein said pain is selected from the group consisting of back pain, joint pain, and sciatic pain.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein said neuronal cell is a dorsal root ganglion cell.

20 14. The method of claim 1, wherein said cartilaginous tissue is intervertebral disc tissue.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein said cartilaginous tissue is articulating joint tissue.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein said articulating joint tissue is knee joint tissue.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein said articulating joint tissue is elbow joint tissue.

5 18. The method of claim 1, wherein said glutamate antagonist is administered directly into an epidural space.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein said glutamate antagonist is administered into spinal fluid.

10 20. The method of claim 1, wherein said glutamate antagonist is administered into a joint space of an articulating joint.

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